The Lyre,

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Introduction.

WERE we deliberately to consider the power of, and the consequences that have in all ages resulted from, Music, we should be the less surprised that so numerous a train of successionary Philanthropists, or true friends to suffering humanity, have explored the means of improving that admirable *Science*. The concurring testimony of both ancient and modern, sacred and profane writers, fully substantiate the fact; it may not therefore be improper to introduce an observation which appears to me to bear strong on the subject: that it is not at all probable that the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles would have combined with the Heathen nations to impose upon posterity, in matters delivered with such an air of truth.

Music is as ancient as the first born of the earth: when the foundations of the world were laid "the Morning Stars sang together, and the Sons of God shouted for joy;" nor can we doubt that the warbling accents of the feathered choir mutually reverberated the harmonious notes, in the most inspiring diversity of vocal strains, to their Creator's praise. Indisputably the cause of all Harmony is God, the origin of all perfection, from whom every useful and really beautiful idea receives its existence. The motives whence sorrow, ambition, revenge, and the innumerable train of other passions which now pervade, agitate, enrapture, or afflict the human mind arise, were not then known; man retaining his primeval rectitude, and living in habits of communion and intimacy with the Deity.

If Music, at that happy period, was so essentially necessary to the full fruition of perfect felicity, how much more does the exiled progeny of apostate Adam now require its salutary influence! Certainly nothing less than a full conviction of the power existing in sound, urged the application of those whose chief business in coming into this world was to illuminate the intellects and refine the manners of mankind, to appropriate their time and abilities to melodious composition, in their incessant meditations and researches towards its progress.

Music awakens* the most tender sensations in the memory; it inculcates sympathy, and the most benevolent feelings in the human breast; it inspires contemplation and animates the affections to celestial objects, where

> "The Songs of Angels, all the melodies
> Of choral Gods are wafted in the sound,
> Heal and exhilarate the broken heart,
> Though plung'd before in horrors dark as night."

* Philosophy clearly proves, that by vibrations all sounds are conveyed to the ear, produced by the perception of the mind, perceiving the motion in the organ, and that acuteness of gravity depends upon the greater or less number of vibrations communicated in any particular time by any particular object.

It expelleth sorrow, dissolveth bad humours, assuages grief, relieves melancholy, and apparently was designed by our Almighty Creator to accompany man through all his painful mortal career: to alleviate his toils, to sweeten his labours, and *sooth* and *charm* his cares to rest. And we have the authority of Revelation itself to countenance the idea, that Music will form a part of the enjoyment of the Blessed in a state of Glory, when they will cast their harps and their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, and Heaven's high arch resound with Hallelujahs to the Lamb of God.—But in this our world, its influence is universal———

"The sprightly lark's shrill matin wakes the morn;
Grief's sharpest thorn hard-pressing on my breast,
I strive with wakeful MELODY, to cheer
The sullen gloom,
To lull my griefs, and steal my heart from wo!
And chase the moments with a serious song:
Songs sooth our pains."————NIGHT THOUGHTS.

It is beneficial to the life of man in general: to the pious for devotion, to the contemplative for science, to the solitary for recreation, to the social for equanimity, to the heathful for their temperament, and to the cheerful for their delight.

Hence the infernal spirits delight in filthy Music, and the celestial choirs in chaste: "Not because," says Lyppius, "corporal harmony doth affect them, but because all harmony, especially that which is conjoined with the affections of a purified will, is grateful to these celestial beings."

Nor is the power of Music less conspicuous in its calming the ebullitions of anger. After a keen dispute that Achilles had with Agamemnon, Chiron having perceived the ferocity and violence of his disposition, taught him Music to moderate and humanize his passions.*

The celebrated *Cicero* said that there was nothing more naturally agreeable to our minds than numbers and sounds, for by these we are soothed and taught to languish.

The stories of *Orpheus, Hermes, Linus, Anthes, Pierius, Philemon, and Amphion* are very remarkable; these sages, by their salutary instructions, enforced with all the charms of Poetry and Music, civilized and polished rude and barbarous nations; by which means they became formed to society, and built towns and cities; from whence succeeding poets ascribed to them the power of taming wild beasts, &c. &c.

"Music has charms to sooth the savage breast.—CONGREVE.

And even Rebellion itself has been crushed by the power of Music.—Plutarch informs us of a popular sedition in Lacedemon being quelled by the soothing accents of Terpander's lyre, and of the rioters of the country of Bœotius being dispersed by the musician Damon.

The celebrated Fenelon informs us, of the Prince of Ithaca being reduced to keep sheep in the deserts of Oasis, and that while there he was comforted by the hymns of Termosiris, a Priest of Apollo, when accompanying his ivory lyre with his voice: and so great was the power of his melody, that the bears, lions, and tigers of the forest fawned upon him and licked his feet! the satyrs came from their recesses and danced around him; and it might *almost* have been believed, that even the trees and rocks were inflamed with the magic of his song! in which he celebrated the majesty of the gods, the virtue of heroes, and the wisdom of those who prefer glory to pleasure.

Apollo himself, being divested of his rays, was compelled to become a shepherd and keep the flocks of Admetus, King of Thessaly. While he was thus disgraced

* Passions are the active parts, or wants of the soul; they occasionally may either help or confound the memory, make wild the imagination, and hurt or aid the understanding; they are various, such as *Anger, Love, Joy, Grief, Sorrow, Fear, Shame, Envy, Compassion, Indignation, Emulation, Hope, Ambition,* &c. &c. &c.

and in exile, he used to sooth his mind with Music under the shade of some elms that flourished upon the borders of a limpid stream. This drew about him all the neighbouring shepherds, whose life till then had been rude and brutal; whose knowledge had been confined to the management of their sheep, and whose country had the appearance of a desert. To these savages Apollo, varying the subject of his song, taught all the arts by which existence is improved into felicity. Sometimes he celebrated the flowers, which improve the graces of Spring—the fragrance which she diffuses, and the verdure which rises under her feet: sometimes the delightful evenings of Summer—her zephyrs that refresh mankind, and her dews, which allay the thirst of the earth; nor were the golden fruits of Autumn forgotten, with which she rewards the labour of the husbandman; nor the cheerful socialities of Winter, who piles her fires till they emulate the sun, and invites the youths to joy and festivity. He also described the gloomy forests which overshadowed the mountains, and the rivers that wind with a pleasing intricacy through the luxurious meadows of the valley. Thus were the shepherds of Thessaly informed of the beauties of creation, and the happiness that is to be found in a rural life, by those to whom nature is not bountiful in vain. Their Music rendered them more happy than kings, and those uncorrupted pleasures, which fly from the palace, were invited to the cottage, the shepherdesses were followed by the sports and smiles of the graces, and adorned by simplicity and innocence their days were devoted to joy; nothing was to be heard but the warblings of birds, the whispers of the zephyrs that sported among the branches of the trees—the murmurs of water falling from a rock, or the songs with which the Muses inspired the shepherds who followed Apollo. Their happiness increased to such a degree, that even the Gods themselves became jealous of it. They now thought the obscurity of a shepherd better than the splendour of a deity, and recalled Apollo to Olympus.

Music has also been the means of curing divers maladies. It calms and predisposes the mind of the patient to receive a remedy, even when it is not that remedy itself.

Thales of Miletus, esteemed one of the seven sages of Greece, by his musical performance in the Lydian mood, cured the Spartiates of a very considerable *plague*, occasioned by a MELANCHOLY, which was contagious, and which the oracle pronounced incurable.

Anciently Music formed a necessary part of the entertainment at the tables of kings, where it was used, not for a spirit of wantonness and levity, but rather as a kind of medicine, which, by inspiring cheerfulness, might prove salubrious to the human frame.

When Saul, king of Israel, was afflicted with an evil spirit from the Lord, he sent for David to play on the harp, and when he played the evil spirit departed, and he was well.*

Demodocus, in the Odyssey, is introduced at the table of Alcinous, king of Phæacia, as singing the transactions of the Trojan war, and the praises of the heroes; and Virgil brings in Topas, at the table of Dido, as explaining in musical numbers the secrets of Physics and the wonders of Astronomy: "from whence," says Quintilian, "it evidently appears, that the poet meant to show the strict connexion between Music and Natural Philosophy."

Atheneus makes mention of many cures performed among the Thebans by Music.

Galen, a very grave author, and whose authority is of the greatest weight in subjects of this kind, speaks very seriously of this custom; and Aristotle, Apollonius, Dipscolus, Capella, and several others, speak of singing as a nostrum in many maladies.† Aulus Gellius quotes Theophrastes, among many other writers, as an ocular

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* And to be convinced that there was nothing supernatural in this, but that music at that time was a known specific in such maladies as Saul compiained of, it need only be remembered that those who gave him the advice were but household servants.

† Several ancient authors assure us, that the most violent paroxysms of the sciatica, or hip-gout, were frequently mitigated, and sometimes entirely removed, by certain gentle modulations of Music.

evidence of the medicinal effects of Music, in the case of persons being bit by serpents or vipers.

There is a pasaage in Tzetzes, which gives rise to a conjecture that may naturally accompany the foregoing: he says, that Orpheus recalled his beloved wife, Eurydice, from the gates of death by the charms of his lyre. And, to take this literally, we might presume from it that Eurydice had been bit by a tarantula,* instead of a serpent, as historians give out; and that Orpheus recovered her by means of music, as is practised in Italy even to this day. In process of time there was founded on this the well-known allegory of his descent into hell—where he played in such melting and ravishing strains, as made all the infernal ghosts to flock around him, and suspended for a while all sense of their pains and punishments, and even prevailed upon the stern Proserpine to grant his request.—The whole of this tragical scene is also inimitably painted by Virgil:—

"He on the desert shore all lonely griev'd,
"And with his concave shell his love-sick mind reliev'd."

Jamblicus relates like extraordinary effects of the lyres of Pythagoras and Empedocles.

An ancient painter having availed himself of the force of music, when going to make a public exhibition of a piece he had finished, whereon a soldier was represented as just ready to assail the enemy; first of all warmed the spirit of the company by a warlike air—and, when he had found them sufficiently animated, uncovered the picture, which struck the whole assembly with admiration.

Plutarch and Dion Chrysostom inform us of the amazing influence which Music had on Alexander, when at an entertainment given after the conquest of Persia, Timotheus, touching his lyre in the Phrygian mood, so animated him with martial rage and a spirit of heroism, that, forgetful of his entertainment, the idea of battles so overwhelmed the powers of his mind, that he imagined himself on the point of charging an enemy, drew his sword, sprang from the table, and would have fallen on his guests, had not the musician perceived the too great power of his art, and immediately changed his music into the Sub-Phrygian, which becalmed his passions, and infused into him the most tender feelings of grief and compunction for his misdemeanor.

A particular purpose, to which the Jewish church appropriated their music, was for the design of prophecy. When Saul was anointed king by Samuel, he bid him "proceed to the hill of God," and "he would there meet a company coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, tabret, pipe, and harp before them—and that they should prophesy, and that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon them:" and when the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom called on Elisha to prophesy, he had recourse to a minstrel—and when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied.†

Another purpose to which the ancients applied their music, was to alleviate the rigour of their criminal punishments, and in this they displayed humanity. The American Indians entertain the same idea of music, having recourse to it to allay the severity of their toils, and the tortures of those whom they overcome in battle.

King Hezekiah declared, in gratitude to God, he "would sing songs of thanksgiving to the stringed instruments in the house of the Lord for ever." "Go forth," saith the God of heaven to the Jews, "flee from the Chaldeans with the voice of singing; the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." And in the bitterness of Job's distress, he said, that

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* The Tarantula is a large spider, with eight eyes and eight legs, the bite of which occasions a deep melancholy.

† It was impossible that it should in any wise effect these ends, were it incapable of elevating and exalting the mind.—This is, perhaps, the highest testimony that it is possible to produce of its amazing power over the soul.

his "*harp* also was turned to mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that wept." Solomon, talking of the days of affliction, says, "the daughters of Music shall be brought low." And Jeremiah, in his Lamentations, observes, "the young men have ceased from their music." And the Lord threatens Tyrus for his insulting triumph over Jerusalem,—"Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus! and will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard." (Ezek. xxvi.)

There is a prevalent custom, among many nations, of attending their dead to the grave with funeral songs—"because," says Macrobius, "they believe the soul returns to heaven, the source of Music and Harmony."

The Greeks, and several others, used music in their battles; and, when advancing towards an enemy, they sang a hymn, to summon all their courage and fortitude, and sanctify themselves for death or victory—

"Hoarse-sounding trumpets fire the soldier's breast."——VALERIUS FLACCUS.

Time would fail me to enumerate the many important events which have been accompanied by Music—not only at the Creation, at the birth of the Redeemer, his Last Supper with his disciples, but through every period of time. And be it remembered, that the final dissolution of all things—the raising the dead—the reappearance of the Redeemer to judge the world, will be preceded by music: "The trumpet shall sound—the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Dr. Watts has most beautifully applied the vast variety of some musical instruments (the harp, for instance) to the wonderful anatomy of the human frame. Speaking of the Almighty preserving health and spirits to old age, considering the very complex nature of our formation, he exclaims—

"Strange! that a harp of thousand strings
"Should keep in tune so long!"

It were most sincerely to be wished, that all who are captivated with the power of Music made a right use of it; for should we, like Solomon, "get men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts," our experience must unavoidably concur with his, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit"—except we seek a renewed heart, a resigned will, and a peaceful conscience—then we never will want a melody in our own breasts—far more musically pleasing than Amphion's golden lyre, or Philomela's sweetest strains.

D. BROWNE.

MR. RIES'S FAREWELL CONCERT.

On Thursday, April 8th, this celebrated composer and performer gave a concert at the Argyle-rooms, London, for the purpose of bidding farewell to a country, where he has been established many years, and by which he has been both admired for his talents, and esteemed for his private worth. We lose him with regret, and he will carry with him the good wishes of the English, wherever his own choice or accident may lead his steps.

The rooms have rarely been so full as on the present occasion; the public flocked to them in crowds, without any solicitation, and thereby manifested, in the strongest practicable manner, their opinion of the artist whom they assembled to honour. Mr. Ries gave an excellent concert, in which he was assisted by most of the first performers in London. Messrs. Cramer and Kalkbrenner were prevented attending by casualties, but Mr. Clementi conducted a new overture, composed by himself, in person.

HARMONICON.

Musical Information.

MALCOLM'S TREATISE ON MUSIC,

SPECULATIVE, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL, CORRECTED AND ABRIDGED BY AN EMINENT MUSICIAN.

London, 1776.

Hail, *sacred art!* descended from above,
To crown our mortal joys: of thee we learn,
How happy souls communicate their raptures;
For thou'rt the language of the Blest in Heav'n.
DIVUM HOMINUMQUE VOLUPTAS.

Of SOUND: *the* CAUSE *of it: and the various Affections of it concerned in* MUSIC.

MUSIC is a science of sounds, whose end is pleasure. Sound is the object in general; or, to speak with the philosophers, it is the material object. But it is not the business of music, taken in a strict and proper sense, to consider every phenomenon and property of sound; that belongs to a more universal philosophy; yet, that we may understand what it is in sounds upon which the formality of music depends, viz. whereby it is distinguished from other sciences, of which sound may also be the object; or, what it is in sounds that makes the particular and proper object of music, whereby it obtains its end; we must a little consider the nature of sound.—

Sound is a word that stands for every perception that comes by the ear immediately. And for the nature of the thing, it is now generally agreed upon among philosophers, and also confirmed by experience, to be the effect of the mutual collision, and consequent tremulous motion in bodies communicated to the circumambient fluid of air, and propagated through it to the organs of hearing.

A treatise that were designed for explaining the nature of sound universally, in all its known and remarkable phenomena, should, no doubt, examine very particularly every thing that belongs to the cause of it; first, the nature of that kind of motion in bodies, (excited by their mutual percussion,) which is communicated to the air; then, how the air receives and propagates that motion to certain distances; and, lastly, how that motion is received by the ear, explaining the several parts of that organ; and their offices, that are employed in hearing. But as the nature and design of what I propose and have essayed in this treatise, does not require so large an account of sounds, I must be content only to consider such phenomena as belong properly to music, or serve for the better understanding of it. In order to which, I shall a little farther enlarge the preceding general account of the cause of sound. And,

First, That motion is necessary in the production of sounds, is a conclusion drawn from all our experience. Again, that motion exists, first among the small and insensible parts of such bodies as are sonorous, or capable of sound; excited in them by mutual collision and percussion, one against another, which produces that tremulous motion so observable in bodies, especially that have a free and clear sound, as bells, and the strings of musical instruments; then this motion is communicated to, or produces a like motion in the air, or such parts of it as are apt to receive and propagate it; for no motion of bodies at distance can affect our senses (or move the parts of our bodies) without the mediation of other bodies, which receive their motions from the sonorous body, and communicate them to the organs of sense; and no other than a fluid can be reasonably supposed. But we know this also by experience; for a bell in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump can scarcely be heard, which was loud enough before the air was drawn out. In the last place, this motion must be commu-

nicated to those parts of the ear that are the proper and immediate instruments of hearing. The mechanism of this noble organ has still great difficulties, which all the industry of the most capable and curious inquirers has not surmounted; there are questions all unsolved about the use of some parts, and perhaps other necessary parts never yet discovered; but the most important question among the learned is about the last and immediate instrument of hearing, or that part which last receives the sonorous motion, and finishes what is necessary on the part of the organ. Consult these with the philosophers and anatomists: I shall only tell you the common opinion, in such general terms as my design permits, thus: Next to the external visible cavity, or passage into the ear, there is a cavity of another form, separated from the former by a thin membrane, or skin, which is called the tympan or drum of the ear, from the resemblance it has to that instrument. Within the cavity of this drum there is always air, like that external air which is the medium of sound. Now, the external air makes its impression first on the membrane of the drum, and this communicates the motion to the internal air, by which it is again communicated to the other parts, till it reaches at last to the auditory nerve, and there the sensation is finished, as far as matter and motion are concerned; and then the mind, by the laws of its union with the body, has that idea we call sound. It is a curious remark, that there are certain parts fitted for the bending and unbending of the drum of the ear, in order, very probably, to the perceiving sounds that are raised at greater or lesser distances, or whose motions have different degrees of force, like what we are more sensible of in the eye, which, by proper muscles, (which are instruments of motion,) we can move outwards or inwards, and change the very figure of, that we may perceive very distant or near objects. But I have gone far enough in this.

Lest what I have said of the cause of sound be too general, particularly with respect to the motion of the sonorous body, which I call the original cause, let us go a little farther with it.—That motion in any body, which is the immediate cause of its sounding, may be owing to two different causes; one is, the mutual percussion between it and another body, which is the case of drums, bells, and the strings of musical instruments, &c. Another cause is the beating or dashing of the sonorous body and the air immediately against one another, as in all kinds of wind instruments, flutes, trumpets, hautboys, &c. Now, in all these cases, the motion which is the consequence of the mutual percussion between the whole bodies, and is the immediate cause of the sonorous motion which the air conveys to our ears, is an invisible tremulous or undulating motion in the small and insensible parts of the body. To explain this;

All visible bodies are supposed to be composed of a number of small and insensible parts, which are of the same nature in every body, being perfectly hard and incompressible; of these infinite little bodies are composed others that are something greater, but still insensible, and these are different according to the different figures and union of their component parts; these are again supposed to constitute other bodies, greater, (which have greater differences than the last,) whose different combinations do, in the last place, constitute those gross bodies that are visible and touchable. The first and smallest parts are absolutely hard; the others are compressible, and are united in such a manner, that being, by a sufficient external impulse, compressed, they restore themselves to their natural or ordinary state; this compression, therefore, happening upon the shock or impulse made by one body upon another, these small parts or particles, by their restitutive power, (which we also call elastic faculty,) move to and again with a very great velocity or swiftness, in a tremulous and undulating manner, something like the visible motions of grosser springs, as the chord of a musical instrument; and this is what we may call the sonorous motion which is propagated to the ear. But, observe, that it is the insensible motion of these particles, next to the smallest which is supposed to be the immediate cause of sound; and of these, those only next the surface can communicate with the air; their motion is performed in very small spaces, and with extreme velocity; the motion of the whole, or of the greater parts being no farther concerned than as they contribute to the other.

And this is the hypothesis upon which Monsieur Perrault, of the Royal Society in France, explains the nature and phenomena of sound, in his curious treatise on that subject. "*Essais de Physique,*" tom. ii. *Du Bruit.* How this theory is supported I shall briefly show, while I consider a few applications of it.

Of those hard bodies that sound by percussion of others, let us consider a bell; strike it with any other hard body, and while it sounds we can discern a sensible tremor in the surface, which spreads more sensibly over the whole, as the shock is greater. This motion is not only in the parts next the surface, but in all the parts through the whole solidity, because we can perceive it also in the inner surface of the bell, which must be by communication with those parts that are immediately touched by the striking body. And this is proved by the ceasing of the sound when the bell is touched in any other part; for this shows the easy and actual communication of the motion. Now this is plainly a motion of the several small and insensible parts changing their situations with respect to one another, which, being so many, and so closely united, we cannot perceive their motions separately and distinctly, but only that trembling which we reckon to be the effect of the confusion of an infinite number of little particles so closely joined, and moving in infinitely small spaces. Thus far any body will easily go with the hypothesis; but Mons. Perrault carries it farther, and affirms, That the nimble motion of the parts is no otherwise the cause of the sound than as it causes the invisible motion of the yet smaller parts, (which he calls particles, to distinguish them from the other, which he calls parts, the least of all being with him corpuscles.) And this he endeavours to prove by other examples, as of chords and wind instruments. Let us consider them.

Take a chord or string of a musical instrument, stretched to a sufficient degree for sounding; when it is fixed at both ends, we may make it sound by drawing the chord from its straight position, and then letting it go; (which has the same effect as what we properly call percussion,) the parts by this drawing, whereby the whole is lengthened, being put out of their natural state, or that which they had in the straight line, do, by their elasticity, restore themselves, which causes that vibratory motion of the whole, whereby it moves to and again beyond the straight line, in vibrations gradually smaller, till the motion cease, and the chord recover its former position. Now the shorter the chord is, and the more it is stretched in a straight line, the quicker the vibrations are; but however quick they are, Mons. Perrault denies them to be the immediate cause of sound; because, says he, in a very long chord, and not very small, stretched only so far as that it may give a distinct sound, we can perceive with our eye, besides the vibrations of the whole chord, a more confused tremor of the parts, which is more discernible toward the middle of the chord, where the parts vibrate in greater spaces in the motion of the whole; this last motion of the parts, which is caused by the first vibration of the whole, does again occasion a motion in the lesser parts of particles, which is the immediate cause of the sound. And this he endeavours to confirm by this experiment, viz.; Take a long chord, (he says he made it with one of thirty feet,) and make it sound; then wait till the sound quite ceases, and then also the visible undulations of the whole chord will cease; if immediately upon this ceasing of the sound, you approach the chord very softly with the nail of your finger, you will perceive a tremulous motion in it, which is the remaining small vibrations of the whole chord. Now these vibrations of the parts are not the immediate cause of sound; else why comes it that while they are yet in motion they raise no sound? The answer is this; That the motion is become too weak to make the sound to be heard at any great distance, which might be heard were the tympan of the ear as near as the nail of the finger, by which we perceive the motion. But to carry off this, Mr. Perrault says, that as soon as this small motion is perceived, we shall hear it sound; which is not occasioned by receiving or augmenting the greater vibrations, because the finger is not supposed to strike against the chord, but this against the finger which ought rather to stop that motion; the cause of this renewed sound, therefore, is, probably, that this weak motion of the parts, which is not sufficient to move the particles (whose motion is the first that ceases,) receives some assistance

from the dashing against the nail, whereby they are enabled to give the particles that motion which is necessary for producing the sound. But lest it should still be thought that this encounter with the nail may as well be supposed to increase the motion of the parts to a degree fit for sounding, as to make them capable of moving the particles; we may consider, that the particles being at rest in the parts, and having each a common motion with the whole part, may very easily be supposed to receive a proper and particular motion by that shock; in the same manner that bodies which are relatively at rest in a ship, will be shaken and moved by the shock of the ship against any body that can any thing considerably oppose its motion. Now, for as simple as this experiment appears to be, I am afraid it cannot be so easily made as to give perfect satisfaction, because we can hardly touch a string with our nail but it will sound.

But Mr. Perrault finishes the proof of his hypothesis by the phenomena of wind-instruments. Take for example a flute; we make it sound by blowing into a long, broad, and thin canal, which conveys the air thrown out of the lungs, till it is dashed against that thin solid part which we call the tongue, or wind-cutter, that is opposite to the lower orifice of the foresaid canal; by which means the particles of that tongue are compressed, and by their restitutive motion, they communicate to the air a sonorous motion, which being immediately thrown against the inner concave surface of the flute, and moving its particles, the motion communicated to the air, by all these particles both of the tongue and inner surface, makes up the whole sound of the flute.

Now to prove that only the very small particles of the inner surface and edge of the tongue are concerned in the sound of the flute, we must consider, that flutes of different matter, as metal, wood, or bone, being of the same length and bore, have none, or very little sensible difference in their sound; nor is this sensibly altered by the different thickness of the flute betwixt the outer and inner surface; nor in the last place, is the sound any way changed by touching the flute, even though it be hard pressed, as it always happens in bells and other hard bodies that sound by mutual percussion. All this Mr. Perrault accounts for by his hypothesis, thus: he tells us, that as the corpuscles are the same in all bodies, the particles which they immediately constitute, have very small differences in their nature and form; and that the specific differences of visible bodies, depend on the differences of the parts made up of these particles, and the various connexion of these parts, which make them capable of different modifications of motion. Now, hard bodies that sound by mutual percussion one against another, owe their sounding to the vibrations of all their parts, and by these to the insensible motions of their particles; but according to the differences of the parts and their connexions, which make them, either silver, or brass, or wood, &c. so are the differences of their sounds. But in wind-instruments (for example, flutes) as there are no such remarkable differences answering to their matter, their sound can only be owing to the insensible motion of the particles of the surface: for these being very little different in all bodies, if we suppose the sound is owing to their motions only, it can have none, or very small difference: and because we find this true in fact, it makes the hypothesis extremely probable. I have never indeed seen flutes of any matter but wood, except of the small kind we call flageolets, of which I have seen ivory ones, whose sound has no remarkable difference from a wooden one; and therefore I must leave so much of this proof upon Monsieur Perrault's credit. As to the other part, which is no less considerable, that no compression of the flute can sensibly change its sound, it is certain, and every body can easily try it. To which we may add, that flutes of different matter are sounded with equal ease, which could not well be if their parts were to be moved; for in different bodies these are differently moveable. But I must make an end of this part, in which I think it is made plain enough, that the motion of a body which causes a sounding motion in the air, is not any motion which we can possibly give to the whole body, wherein all the parts are moved in one common direction and velocity; but it is the motion of the several small and undistinguishable parts, which being compressed by

an external force, do, by their elastic power, restore themselves, each by a motion particular and proper to itself. But whether you will distinguish parts and particles as Mr. Perrault does, I leave to yourselves, my design not requiring any accurate determination of this matter. And now to come nearer to our subject, I shall next consider the differences and affections of sounds that are any way concerned in music.

Sounds are as various, or have as many differences, as the infinite variety of things that concur in their production; which may be reduced to these general heads: First, the quantity, constitution, and figure of the sonorous body; with the manner of percussion, and the consequent velocity of the vibrations of the parts of the body and the air; also their equality and uniformity, or inequality and irregularness. Secondly, the constitution and state of the fluid medium through which the motion is propagated. Thirdly, the disposition of the ear that receives that motion. And, fourthly, the distance of the ear from the sonorous body. To which we may add, lastly, the consideration of the obstacles that interpose betwixt the sonorous body and the ear; with other adjacent bodies that, receiving an impression from the fluid so moved, re-act upon it, and give new modification to the motion, and consequently to the sound. Upon all these do our different perceptions of sound depend.

The variety and differences of sounds, owing to the various degrees and combinations of the conditions mentioned, are innumerable; but to our present design we are to consider the following distinctions.

1. Sounds come under the specific distinction, according to the kinds of bodies from which they proceed: thus, metal is easily distinguished from other bodies by the sound; and among metals there is great difference of sound, as is discernible, for example, betwixt gold, silver, and brass. And for the purpose in hand, a most notable difference is that of stringed and wind-instruments of music, of which there are also sub-divisions: these differences depend, as has been said, upon the different constitutions of these bodies: but they are not strictly within the consideration of music, not the mathematical part of it at least, though they may be brought into the practical; of which afterwards.

2. Experience teaches us, that some sounds can be heard, by the same ear, at greater distances than others; and when we are at the same distance from two sounds, I mean from the sonorous body or the place where the sound first rises, we can determine (for we learn it by experience and observation) which of the two will be heard farthest: by this comparison we have the idea of a difference whose opposite terms are called loud and low (or strong and weak.) This difference depends both upon the nature of different bodies, and upon other accidental circumstances, such as their figure; or the different force in the percussion; and frequently upon the nature of the circumjacent bodies, that contribute to the strengthening of the sound, that is a conjunction of several sounds so united as to appear only as one sound: but as the union of several sounds gives occasion to another distinction, it shall be considered again, and we have only to observe here that it is always the cause of loudness; yet this difference belongs not strictly to the theory of music, though it is brought into the practice, as that in the first article.

3. There is an affection or property of sound, whereby it is distinguished into acute, sharp, or high; and grave, flat, or low. The idea of this difference you will get by comparing several sounds or notes of a musical instrument, or of a human voice singing. Observe the term *low*, is sometimes opposed to loud, and sometimes to acute, which yet are very different things: loudness is very well measured by the distance or sphere of audibility, which makes the notion of it very clear. Acuteness, is so far different, that a voice or sound may ascend or rise in degree of acuteness, and yet lose nothing of its loudness, which can easily be demonstrated upon any instrument, or even in the voice; and particularly if we compare the voice of a boy and a man.

This relation of acuteness and gravity is one of the principal things concerned in music, the nature of which shall be particularly considered afterwards; and I shall here observe that it depends altogether upon the nature of the sonorous body itself,

and the particular figure and quantity of it; and in some cases upon the part of the body where it is struck. So that, for example, the sounds of two bells of different metals, and the same shape and dimensions, being struck in the same place, will differ as to acuteness and gravity; and two bells of the same metal will differ in acuteness, if they differ in shape or in magnitude, or be struck in different parts: so in chords, all other things being equal, if they differ either in matter, or dimensions, or the degree of tension, as being stretched by different weights, they will also differ in acuteness.

But we must carefully remark, that acuteness and gravity, also loudness and lowness, are but relative things; so that we cannot call any sound acute or loud, but with respect to another which is grave or low in reference to the former; and therefore the same sound may be acute or grave, also loud or low in different respects. Again, these relations are to be found not only between the sounds of different bodies, but also between different sounds of the same body, for different force in the percussion will cause a louder or lower sound, and striking the body in different parts will make an acuter or graver sound, as we have remarkably demonstrated in a bell, which as the stroke is greater gives a greater or louder sound, and being struck nearer the open end, gives the graver sound. How these degrees are measured, we shall learn again, only mind that these degrees of acuteness and gravity are also called different and distinguishable tones or tunes of a voice or sound; so we say one sound is in tune with another when they are in the same degree: acute and grave being but relations, we apply the name of tune to them both, to express something that is constant and absolute which is the ground of the relation; in like manner as we apply the name *magnitude* both to the things we call great and little, which are but relative ideas: each of them have a certain magnitude, but only one of them is great and the other little when they are compared; so of two sounds each has a certain tune, but only one is acute and the other grave in comparison.

4. There is a distinction of sounds, whereby they are denominated long or short; which relates to the duration, or continued, and sensibly uninterrupted existence of the sound. This is a thing of very great importance in music; but to know how far, and in what respect it belongs to it, we must distinguish betwixt the natural and artificial duration of sound. I call that the natural duration or continuity of sound, which is less or more in different bodies, owing to their different constitutions, whereby one retains the motion once received longer than another does; and consequently the sound continues longer (though gradually weaker) after the external impulse ceases; so bells of different metals, all other things being equal and alike, have different continuity of sound after the stroke: And the same is very remarkable in strings of different matter: there is too a difference in the bell or string, according to the force of the percussion. This continuity is sometimes owing to the sudden reflection of the sound from the surface of neighbouring bodies, which is not so properly the same sound continued, as a new sound succeeding the first so quickly as to appear to be only its continuation: but this duration of sound does not properly belong to music, wherefore let us consider the other. The artificial continuity of sound is, that which depends upon the continued impulse of the efficient cause upon the sonorous body for a longer or shorter time, such are the notes of a voice or any wind-instrument, which are longer or shorter as we continue to blow into them; or, the notes of a violin and all stringed-instruments that are struck with a bow, whose notes are made longer or shorter by strokes of different lengths or quickness of motion; for a long stroke, if it is quickly drawn, may make a shorter note than a short stroke drawn slowly. Now, this kind of continuity is properly the succession of several sounds, or the effect of several distinct strokes, or repeated impulses, upon the sonorous body, so quick that we judge it to be one continued sound, especially if it is continued in one degree of strength and loudness; but it also must be continued in one degree of tune, else it cannot be called one note in music.

To be Continued.

MUSICAL PHENOMENON.

In the more select musical circles, where the leading professors associate in the character of friends, rather than that of artists, there has been unobtrusively stealing into notice, a child, in whom is developed so early, and so extraordinary a talent for music, that the most fastidious predict for him a reputation of the highest order, and speak of him as the genius born to bestow a character for eminence in that art, which has hitherto been withheld by foreigners from the natives of this country, (England.) His name is George Aspull, and his present age (March, 1824,) only eight years.

His father was formerly in business, but not being successful in the pursuit he at first chose, was compelled to resort to music as a profession ; and by diligent and successful practice, has acquired some reputation as a performer on the violin.

It was not till his son had considerably passed the age of five years, that he gave any indications of that decided bent which his mind has since taken, but the marks of genius he *then* discovered, were so evident, that Mr. Aspull determined to undertake himself the care of his education in music, and devoted his whole attention to that object. The fruit of his care and assiduity is apparent in the surprising talent which young Aspull now displays. He performs on the Piano-forte, at which he does not usually sit, his stature being so small as to render the position of standing that which gives him the most perfect command of the instrument. His fingers are extremely short, even for his age ; with the left hand, he cannot reach an octave so as to press down the two notes which form at one time, and is only enabled to do so with the right hand, with much difficulty, and by depressing the wrist. The impediment thus formed to the acquisition of the mere mechanical difficulties of the Piano-forte, will be perfectly understood by all those who have ever attempted that instrument ; but they have not prevented young Aspull from conquering the most complex and rapid passages that ever appeared in the form of musical composition.

The compositions of Kalkbrenner and Moschelles, prepared for displaying in public the manual skill of those celebrated professors, are played evidently without the smallest effort, by this extraordinary child. He has also made himself master of a difficult piece by Czerny, who wrote it as a trial of skill for all the professors of Europe, and in order to combine all the mechanical niceties of execution of which the instrument is susceptible. This piece, consisting of only *one* movement, occupies nearly forty pages of printed music, every one of which is crowded with rapid divisions, intricate modulations, and the most chromatic passages that the art of the composer could devise.

But the mechanical skill of young Aspull, is that which has least surprised those who have had the pleasure of hearing him perform. A child with a certain cleverness and quickness of parts, may be taught by repeated efforts to conquer the greatest intricacies, and when conquered, there will remain nearly the same impression from them, which results on viewing an exhibition on the tight rope, or the antic tricks of the unfortunate pupils of a posture master. Mr. Aspull's pupil is not of this class : the boy's mind evidently participates in all that his hand executes. A passage which he is compelled to leave imperfect, through a defect of physical power, does not stop or disconcert him, as it would an ordinary pupil, but he passes on to the next, and is as certain to give it with effect, as if himself had composed it. Short as the period is which young Aspull has devoted to the study of music, he has cultivated every style and all with success. In these are included the concertos of Handel, and the fugues of the Bachs and Scarlatti, than which latter, perhaps, no works could possibly be selected less accessible to a juvenile student. Young Aspull unites with these the talent which is rare among professors, of *extempore* playing, at which, if permitted to do so, he will pass hours, and with a fluency that would indicate musical notes to be that vehicle by which he could best express his ideas. He sings ballads to his own accompaniment on the Piano-forte, in a voice thin and weak, owing to his extreme youth, but with peculiar taste and delicate expression.

His appearance and behaviour do not differ from those of other children of the same age; but his manner, when performing at the Piano forte, is that of a person deeply attentive. The most rapid and involved passages, do not produce a change of countenance, nor any sign of effort. Little study is requisite even for the most elaborate pieces; and those of ordinary difficulty he can execute at once, on being permitted to cast his eye over them, before taking his station at the Piano-forte. This extraordinary boy, bears about him the prognostics of future eminence, which could not have been greater or more conclusive in the person of Mozart himself.

The king, having heard the wonderful talents of this child described, expressed a wish to be enabled himself to judge of their reality. Young Aspull accordingly had the honour of being introduced to his majesty, for the first time, on the 20th of February, at Windsor palace. A select party was invited to witness his performance. Young Aspull took his station at the Piano-forte at about half past nine o'clock, and for the remainder of the evening, during more than three hours, had the eclat of absorbing nearly the whole attention of the royal party.

The specimens given of his proficiency were selected from composers of every style, and of every variety of difficulty, over which he exhibited a perfect mastery. The more elaborate pieces of Beethoven, Mozart, Hummel, Kalkbrenner, Moschelles, Kreutzer, and Clementi, were played in succession with a force and precision that drew repeated exclamations of surprise from his hearers. The king, who the greater part of the time sat at his side, frequently interrupted his performance by cries of *bravo!* and encouragingly patting the young performer on the back. The Princess Augusta, who has herself studied music with great success, honoured the juvenile pianiste, by turning over the leaves of the book from which he played. Between the instrumental pieces, for the sake of variety, young Aspull sung simple airs, accompanying himself on the Piano-forte. The impression made upon his majesty and the whole company, was that of unqualified admiration; and the king, to afford another opportunity of estimating his extraordinary powers, gave order, when the party separated, that young Aspull should remain at Windsor, and be in attendance on the following evening.

HARMONICON.

THE COMPONIUM,

A Musical Instrument of a new construction, now (*Mar.* 1824.) *exhibiting at Paris.*

THIS extraordinary instrument has excited extraordinary interest at Paris. Its ingenious inventor, M. Winkel, of Amsterdam, has given it the astonishing faculty of imitating extemporaneous performance, and of reducing into harmonic form all the possible combinations which the most bold and fertile imagination could produce. The prodigies announced respecting it, at the same time that they awakened the curiosity, also excited the distrust of the musical public, as to the reality of the mechanical means to which such wonderful results were attributed. The charge of charlatanism to which this incredulity gave rise against the proprietors of the *componium*, rendered it necessary for them to prove that, in effect, what they gave out to be a machine, laid no farther claim to human sensation than what it received from a man of extraordinary ingenuity.

In order to attain this object, which the proprietors had so much at heart, and to demonstrate the truth of their assertion, those gentlemen lately assembled a considerable body of *savans*, composers, and enlightened amateurs, among whom were Messrs. Le Sueur, Boyeldieu, Berton, Catel, Habenack, Päer, Biot, of the *Academie des Sciences*, Mr. Breguet, junior, le Duc de Grammont, le Comte de Montesquieu, &c.

The *Componium*, as tried by this assemblage of impartial judges, produced upon the auditory an effect difficult to be described. The astonishment of the hearers was at its height, when, after having executed a march, with variations by *Moschales*, the instrument was left to follow its own inspirations; the applause was loud and unanimous, and some exclaimed that it was altogether miraculous.

Still, the more perfect the execution, the stronger the feeling of incredulity became. Much discussion arose, the result of which was, a general and decided opinion, that the effects of the *Componium* could be produced only by some highly finished automaton. This deduction, to which reason naturally led, might easily, by an inspection of the interior mechanism of the instrument, be strengthened into conviction. The company, therefore, requested Messrs. Catel and Biot to examine the instrument, and to decide by their report, upon the future fame or condemnation of the machine. These gentlemen complied with the general request, and made the following

***REPORT** upon the Componium, a Musical Instrument of a new Construction, now exposed to public inspection.*

"The Proprietors of the *Componium* desiring to give the public a clear and distinct idea of the instrument which they at present are submitting to their inspection, have requested us to examine its internal mechanism, and to characterize the properties we have discovered therein. We trust we have faithfully complied with their request in the following testimony, which, marvellous as is the reality it presents, is yet literally and strictly correct.

"When this instrument has received a varied theme, which the inventor has had time to fix by a process of his own, it decomposes the variations of itself, and reproduces their different parts in all the orders of possible permutation, the same as the most capricious imagination might do; it forms successions of sound so diversified, and produced by a principle so arbitrary, that even the person the best acquainted with the mechanical construction of the instrument, is unable to foresee at any given moment, the chords that are about to be produced.

"A single example will suffice to show the freedom of choice that is permitted by it. None of the airs which it varies, last above a minute; could it be supposed that one of these airs was played without interruption, yet, through the principle of variability which it possesses, it might, without ever resuming precisely the same combination, continue to play not only during years and ages, but during so immense a series of ages, that though figures might be brought to express them, common language could not.

(Signed,)

Paris, Feb. 2, 1824. } J. B. BIOT, *de l'Academie des Sciences.*
} CATEL, *de l'Academie des Beaux Arts.*

We have only to add to this report, for the information of our English readers, who may not be acquainted with the above names, M. Biot is one of the most distinguished philosophers of the age, and cannot easily be imposed upon; for he is an admirable mechanic, and acquainted with music. M. Catel is the celebrated theorist, well known by his scientific work on harmony. Both rank so high as men of honour and ability, that whatever appears under their signature, is entitled to the utmost respect and credit.

HARMONICON.

In a future number we shall give a historical and descriptive Account of the Componium.

EDITOR.

NEW-YORK CHORAL SOCIETY.

MR. EDITOR,

In compliance with the intimation previously expressed in your first number, I now proceed to offer a few remarks on the second grand performance of this society, which was given in St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway, on the evening of Tuesday, May 25th.

Leader of the band, as before, Mr. E. C. Riley—Organist, Mr. Wm. Blondell.

Agreeably to the original stipulation of the society, to bring forward four performances in the year, and encouraged by the very marked approbation bestowed on their

first Oratorio in St. George's, the standing committee immediately commenced their arrangements for a second performance. Having, through the politeness of the Rev. Rector of St. Paul's, obtained the use of that spacious and eligible Chapel, a temporary Orchestra, with three rows of seats, extending from one side gallery to the other, and capable of containing all the vocal performers, with a few of the principal musicians, was erected in front of the Organ. This part of the arrangement was most judicious; and entirely obviated the inconvenience felt in St. George's, from the great distance at which the performers were placed from each other, besides contributing in an eminent degree to the beauty of the appearance of the choir, and to the general effect of the music.

The overtures to the first and second part, being the same as in the first Oratorio, we shall make no other remark respecting them, except that they were evidently improved by repeated rehearsals, and given with very superior precision and effect. One deficiency was indeed observable, and too conspicuous to be entirely passed over, namely, the absence of the trumpet, in the Occasional, by Handel, which occurred in consequence of the unexpected and unavoidable detention of Mr. I. Petrie, whose admirable execution we noticed in our former communication. From the same cause also, the audience were deprived of the gratification of hearing this gentleman's vocal powers in the opening solo from Handel, "Holy, Holy, Lord God," which had been assigned him; fortunately, however, Mr. A. Taylor, the distinguished vocalist who had been engaged for this performance, was present, and who, on being requested by the conductor, supplied this deficiency with his accustomed promptitude and politeness, and in his ever pleasing and delightful style.

A most admirable chorus, "Gloria in Excelsis," by Pergolesi succeeded, and was performed in the best manner by both choir and orchestra. This beautiful composition increases in our estimation by every repetition, and will always be heard with renewed pleasure. An Air, by Dahmen, was next sung by Miss E. Coates, a very promising young lady, who combines a distinct enunciation with considerable expression and power of voice. The favourite air, "Lord, what is Man," adapted from one of Handel's Italian oratorios, was sung by Mr. A. Taylor, with all that sweetness of tone and chastity of style for which he is so celebrated. The pleasing trio and chorus from the oratorio of Saul, "Welcome, Welcome, Mighty King," was the next in order, to which succeeded the air, "'Tis Liberty," from Judas Maccabeus which was given in very good style by Mrs. Fagan. This was followed by the spirited trio from the same oratorio, "Disdainful of Danger," which was well sustained and correctly executed by Messrs. Dyer, Cole, and Beastall. Those persons conversant with the respective powers of these performers, could not but notice the great dissimilarity of the style of each from the other, and were not prepared to expect that under these circumstances this piece could have produced so good an effect.

To this trio succeeded the well known semi and full chorus from Judas Maccabeus, "See, the Conquering Hero comes," in which (though otherwise well performed) the absence of the trumpet was severely felt, as also in the spirited and brilliant chorus, "Sing unto God," which concluded the first part.

The second part opened with the favourite overture by Jomelli, before noticed. The beautiful melody, "Most Beautiful Appear," from a trio in the Creation, was sung, as a solo by Mrs. Singleton, with accuracy and effect. The admired motetto, "O God when Thou Appear'st," was well sustained by the choir and orchestra, and the high opinion which had been previously formed of the force and sublimity of this piece, was fully confirmed. The favourite air from the Creation, "With Verdure Clad," was next sung by Mrs. Fagan in her best manner, accompanied on the Organ only, by Mr. Blondell, in a most exquisite and masterly style, which, as well as his whole performance throughout the evening, elicited the applause not only of the impartial, but of the most captious connoisseurs present. An air from the Redemption, "Pleasure my Former Ways," by Handel, seldom, perhaps never before, heard in this city, was given by Mr. A. Taylor, with excellent effect, and was succeeded by the

fine chorus from Samson, "Then round about the Starry Throne." The splendid Recit. and air, by Himmel, a composer of considerable celebrity, which followed this chorus, afforded ample scope for the display of Mrs. Singleton's powers, and it will be admitted, we think, on all hands, that she never appeared to so great advantage, or evinced so decisively as she did on this occasion, her proficiency in music, and command of voice. This solo, was unquestionably, one of the most brilliant and highly approved of the pieces which had been selected for this performance. The sublime chorus from the "Mount of Olives," was performed with much additional precision and energy, and concluded in a most appropriate and satisfactory manner, the second grand performance of the Choral society.

The very general approbation expressed by those who were present on this occasion, together with the suggestions of several respectable individuals, induced the society to repeat it, in the same week, before the removal of the temporary orchestra. This accordingly was done on the following Friday evening, when the beauty and interest of the whole were exceedingly heightened by the brilliant and powerful tones of Mr. Petrie's trumpet. The night unfortunately proved stormy, which prevented many from attending, who otherwise would have availed themselves of this opportunity, to hear some of the most sublime efforts of genius performed in a style corresponding with their lofty character.

In conclusion, we think we are warranted in saying, that this infant society, has certainly effected much, considering the very short time which has elapsed since its organization; and we sincerely hope, that its future efforts may excite more attention among the lovers of this description of music in our metropolis, and receive a more liberal patronage than has hitherto been extended to it. And it is considered proper here to remark, that good choral music of more than ordinary character, is not to be expected, but from a society or institution of this kind; having its stated meetings for practice, its regular conductor, and instrumental and vocal leaders, with other facilities for executing with proper style and effect. Many suppose, that in getting up a performance, it is only necessary to invite sundry persons, who are known individually to be correct singers, and capable of sustaining their parts; and that with such assistance, their music will be certainly well performed—without frequent rehearsals, or any pains in making the necessary arrangements: but this is a most erroneous idea; and in confirmation of this assertion, it will only be necessary to refer to more than one performance that has taken place in this city in the course of the past winter; when, although there was a most respectable assemblage of musical talent, the concerts, taken as a whole, were very indifferently performed, and proved alike mortifying to the performers of ability who were concerned in them, and unsatisfactory, not to say disgusting to the audience. No—we assert without fear of contradiction, that an oratorio to be respectably executed, must have an able conductor, to whom a proper deference must be paid—competent leaders on the several instruments and voices, in whom the orchestra and choir have confidence, and in addition they must meet frequently to acquire, and perform together in the proper style. In this therefore consists the advantages and superiority of a well-organized society for choral purposes, over a promiscuous number of performers, however capable, suddenly called together to carry through a performance. We feel assured that the experience of all those who have been conversant in the performance of oratorios, will confirm this representation of the subject. And this leads us lastly to remark, that, although we are aware that the price of admission to these performances of the choral society (viz. one dollar) has been considered too high, and formed the principal cause of the small attendance at them, yet we believe, that every reflecting person will not think it a disproportionate charge, when the amount of talent, time, and labour necessary to the production of a performance of this kind on a respectable scale, is impartially considered: and we look forward with fond anticipation, to the period, when efforts of this kind shall be duly appreciated, and a corresponding liberality be extended to this and similar institutions, which have for their object, the improvement of sacred music, and the formation of a correct and refined taste throughout the community.